

TWO powerfully headed goals in two minutes by centre forward Howard Kettleborough proved just enough to earn Wycombe Wanderers victory over local rivals Chesham United in Saturday's Berks and Bucks Senior Cup quarter-final at the Meadow.

When the tall Kettleborough, always a handful for former Wanderer Vince Faulkner, headed home in the 16th and 18th minutes, it looked as though United would be overrun in the sea of mud that dominated the game. But to their credit, they held out until the interval and then threw everything they had at the Blues.

Their reward came in the 84th minute but by then Stuart Atkins' late goal was not enough to earn what many felt was a deserved replay.

The Meadow looked a sorry sight before the game got underway and once the players had been in action it became even worse. Both sides deserve the highest praise for the standard of football produced on what resembled a ploughed field.

Wanderers made several surprise changes for the game. In came Peter Spittle for John Maskell while Mick Holifield's injury meant that Peter Cruse dropped back to midfield and Dylan Evans returned to the front line.

At the start Wanderers looked a class above their opponents and United could make little impression as the Blues coolly stroked the ball around with real accuracy. By contrast, Chesham's long ball down the middle tactics for dangerman Atkins looked basic and caused few problems to Alan Phillips and Keith Mead.

SUPERB HEADER

Slowly but surely Wycombe began to carve out chances. Evans just missed at the far post and then in the 16th minute, Wanderers opened their account with a great goal. Making the most of the rare patch of green on the right flank, Paul Birdseye controlled a clearance and crossed firmly into the middle. It looked too far for Kettleborough but he launched himself superbly and flashed a diving header into the roof of the net off the underside of the crossbar.

Just two minutes later 'Kets' had done it again. Dave Le Sage fouled Ian Pearson on the edge of the box and Pearson himself took the kick. Chesham had ample time to clear but the ball bobbed around inside the penalty area until Pearson crossed again for Kettleborough to head firmly past Peter Smith.

United's problems in defence suggested that there could be a landslide victory on the cards for Wycombe. Kettleborough's height caused countless problems while Pearson was a constant threat.

Chesham, though, had other ideas. They tightened up the back four and began to compete fiercely in midfield. Alan Cordice, one of three footballing brothers,

had a marvellous time in midfield and frequently got the better of Cruse. But United were still unable to worry Spittle and the goalkeeper had still to make his first serious save when half time arrived.

Things changed dramatically after the break.

INJURED

Forced to replace the injured Geoffrey Cordice and move brother Alan up front, Chesham took the game by the scruff of its neck and put Wycombe firmly under pressure. Only poor finishing robbed them of goals but they at least had the satisfaction of keeping Wycombe penned inside their own half for much of the last 45 minutes.

BLUES AWAY

WYCOMBE Wanderers travel to the winners of the Hungerford v Wolverton replay in the semi-final of the Berks and Bucks Senior Cup on March 5 — yet another away draw for the Blues in this competition.

The 'big two' in the Allied Counties Cup — Slough and Wycombe — have therefore been kept apart by the draw. Slough visit Wokingham Town on February 12 in the other tie. The reason for the long gap between the two matches is the involvement of clubs in the F.A. Trophy and Vase competitions.

Hungerford and Wolverton replay on February 5 at Hungerford after drawing 0-0 on Saturday.

This was partly due to Wycombe's deficiencies in midfield where none of the trio looked happy. The midfield morass didn't help but I doubt whether any one of the three players in question felt happy with their individual games as they trudged off the field at the end.

United's blitz began in the 49th minute when Le Sage's first time drive was well taken by Spittle. For the next 10 minutes Chesham built up half a dozen attacks but failed to score. Atkins slipped Mead but saw his drive saved by Spittle and then United's leading scorer broke through again but this time shot powerfully past the far post.

Once again Atkins ran across the face of goal to turn in another shot after 58 minutes, but Spittle was there again to prove his worth. Wanderers gave away a string of free kicks in trying to halt the flow but this only increased the pressure.

A collision in the 65th minute between Mead and Phillips left Chris Nash a clear run but he held onto the ball too long and Atkins' eventual shot curled over the cross-bar. Two minutes later Faulkner headed fractionally wide from Gordon Taylor's free kick. Taylor showed a good deal of skill at left back and his clever overlapping needed careful attention.

The Blues tried hard to break this succession of home attacks but little went right for them. Evans and Pearson looked far from happy and with midfield also struggling, all the pressure came back onto the defence who were forced to soak up everything Chesham could throw at them.

GREAT CHANCE

There was a great chance for United in the 70th minute when Cordice ran half the length of the field with the defence hastily back pedalling. But with the unmarked Stan Marshall pleading for the ball in the middle, Cordice drove the ball straight at the goalkeeper.

Wanderers at last managed to create an attack in the 78th minute when Mead headed over the top but Chesham hit back immediately and deservedly found the net with six minutes left. It was a strange goal stemming from a throw-in. Atkins tried a speculative shot that Spittle seemed to have covered, but the ball struck the far post and bounced into the net.

Spurred on by their belated breakthrough, the home side searched hard in the remaining minutes but Wycombe's defence, once again their best unit, held out until the close.

CHESHAM: P. Smith; S. Simmonds, P. Johnson, V. Faulkner, G. Taylor; K. Beaven, D. Le Sage, A. Cordice; S. Atkins, S. Marshall, G. Cordice (sub C. Nash 45 mins). Sub J. Dixon (not used).

WYCOMBE: P. Spittle; P. Birdseye, K. Mead, A. Phillips, R. Davies; H. Kennedy, J. Priestley, P. Cruse; D. Evans (sub A. Horseman 79 mins), H. Kettleborough, I. Pearson. Sub D. Bullock (not used).

Referee: R. Sibley (Reading).
Half-time: 0-2. **Goalscorers:** Wycombe — Kettleborough 2 (16, 18). Chesham — Atkins (84).

Latest table

ROTHMANS ISTHMIAN LEAGUE DIVISION ONE (up to and inc. 22/1/77)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dagenham	27	15	6	6	47	26	51
Leatherhead	25	15	2	8	44	23	47
Wycombe	26	14	5	7	39	23	47
Tilbury	28	13	7	8	38	34	46
Walthamstow	27	14	3	10	43	34	45
Enfield	24	12	8	4	29	20	44
Tooting	26	11	5	10	51	47	38
Sutton	25	11	5	9	32	32	38
Slough	22	11	4	7	33	25	37
Leytonstone	24	10	6	8	37	33	36
Hitchin	21	11	3	7	26	26	36
Bishops Stfd	26	10	5	11	36	33	35
Hendon	24	10	4	10	34	32	34
Barking	25	9	3	13	28	36	30
Croydon	23	8	5	10	22	25	29
Southall	23	8	4	11	33	28	28
Hayes	24	8	3	13	26	40	27
Staines	19	7	5	7	17	18	26
Woking	24	7	5	12	31	39	26
Kingstonian	25	7	4	14	28	37	25
Dulwich	25	4	6	15	27	43	18
Ilford	23	2	4	17	10	47	10